

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace paragraph number [0011] with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0011] In accordance with the present invention as embodied and broadly described in this document, according to one aspect of this invention, there is provided a precursor composition that is curable into a rubber component and comprises a first hydrogenated nitrile conjugated-diene copolymer modified by a metal salt unsaturated carboxylic acid ester, wherein the hydrogenated nitrile conjugated-diene copolymer is derived from a first composition comprising a first ethylenically unsaturated nitrile and a first conjugated diene a second hydrogenated nitrile conjugated-diene copolymer derived from a second composition comprising a second ethylenically unsaturated nitrile and a second conjugated diene; and curing agent, wherein the first hydrogenated nitrile conjugated-diene copolymer and the second hydrogenated nitrile conjugated-diene copolymer are intermixed. The carbon-carbon double bonds in each of the first and second hydrogenated nitrile conjugated-diene copolymers may be hydrogenated to between about 85% and about 95% saturation. Further, the carbon-carbon double bonds in each of the first and second hydrogenated nitrile conjugated-diene copolymers may be hydrogenated to between about 90% and about 92% saturation.